

# Vermont's Universal Prekindergarten Education

## Accountability and Continuous Improvement System



Ensuring Equitable Access to High Quality  
Prekindergarten Education for Each and Every Child

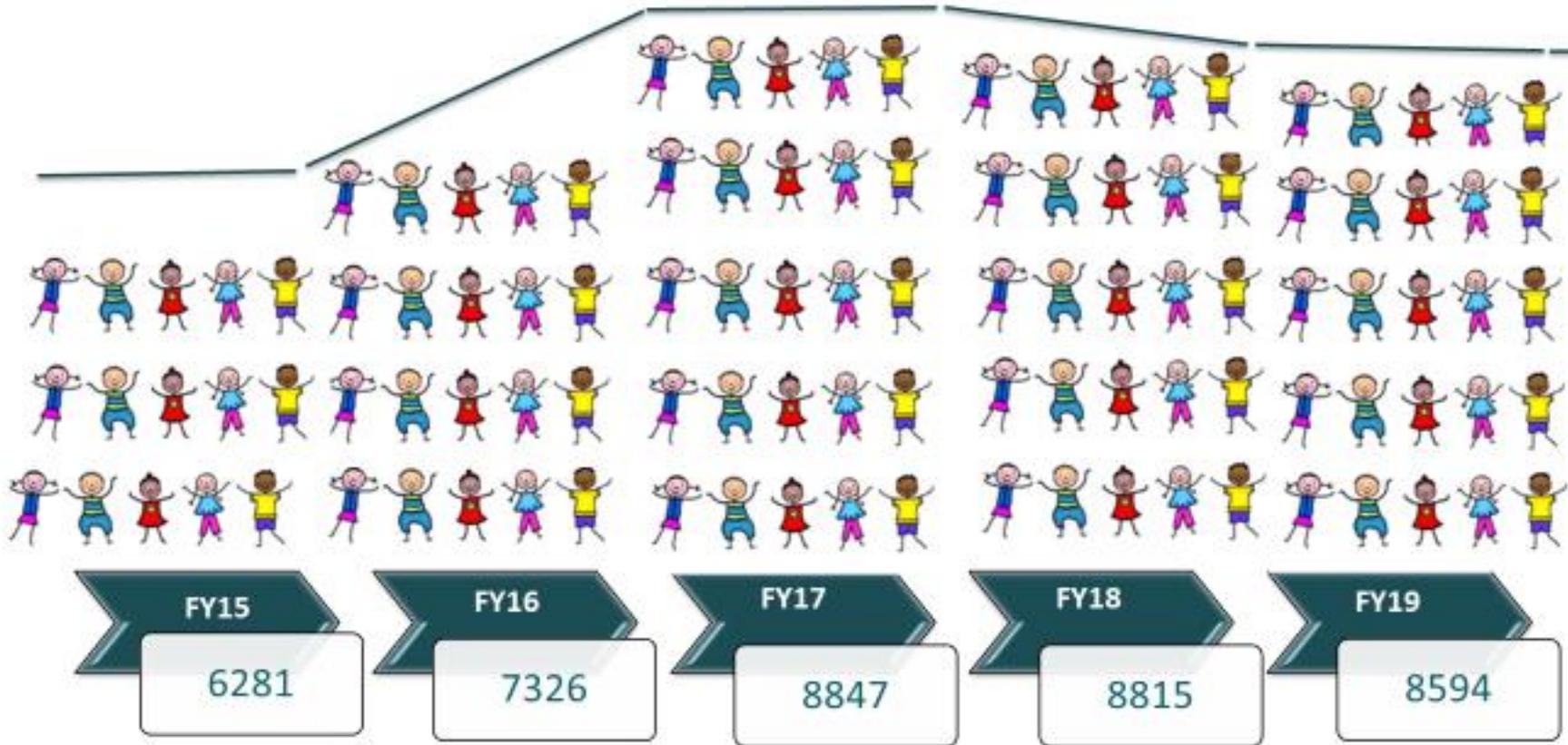
# Prekindergarten Education Defined

What defines Vermont's Universal Prekindergarten Education (UPK) is the implementation of high-quality, effective instruction by licensed educators who use evidence-based practices within intentionally designed early learning environments.

Early educators align curriculum with the Vermont Early Learning Standards while adapting experiences to support the full participation of each and every child to realize their full potential and promote successful outcomes.



# PreK Enrollment



# Universal Prekindergarten Education (UPK)

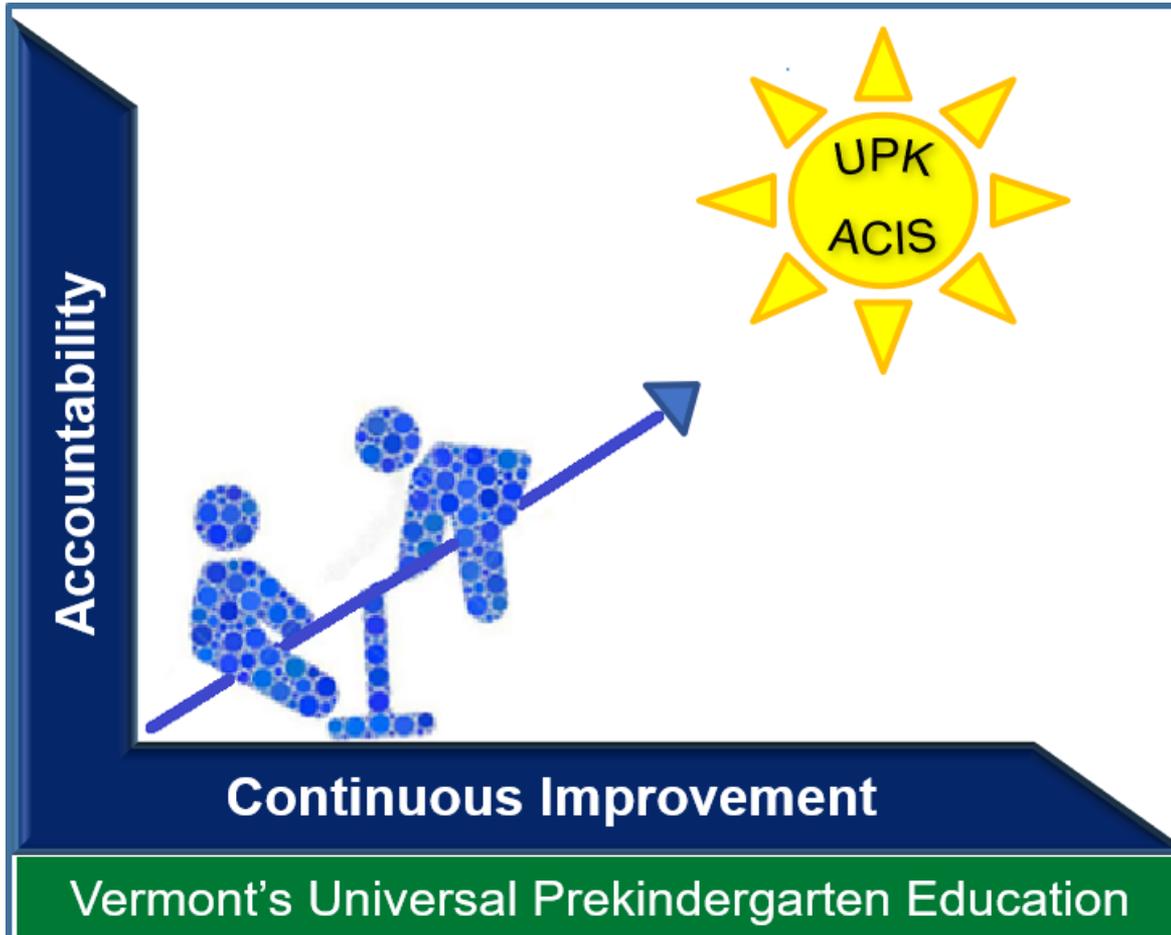
Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A § 829 Prekindergarten Education Law  
Act 166 mandates that a state UPK monitoring system be established and implemented to ensure prequalified PreK programs are in compliance with the law.



# UPK Accountability and Continuous Improvement System (ACIS)



# Building UPK ACIS



AOE contracted with Lewin Group to assist with design



RTT ELC funded this work



11 Stakeholder meetings convened June 2016-Dec 2017



Lewin Group works closely with AOE/AHS program and data teams to build system



June 2019 Lewin Group submits final monitoring design to AOE/AHS



Summer/Fall 2019 UPK ACIS system soft launch implemented

# UPK ACIS

## Who must comply with the UPK ACIS?



### Public Schools

- ✓ Prequalified PreK classrooms operated in school building(s) or at other location(s)

### Private prequalified programs:

- ✓ Center-based child care (including Head Start programs)
- ✓ Family child care homes

# UPK ACIS

- 1) Is based on current evidence focused on the elements of quality monitoring systems
- 2) Builds and aligns with AOE and AHS existing quality monitoring systems and processes
- 3) Addresses eleven compliance requirements of Act 166 as well as needs and priorities (VELS, portability, regions, etc.)
- 4) Is feasible to implement within Vermont's current resources and capabilities

# UPK ACIS

- 🔍 Ensures compliance with UPK requirements
- 👤 Promotes high quality PreK Education for each child
- 📈 Promotes equitable access to high quality PreK Education
- 🔍 Focuses on continuous improvement
- 🔍 Promotes balanced approach—professional development, training, technical assistance

# Act 166 Compliance Requirements



# 11 Compliance Requirements

## Public and Private Prequalified PreK Programs shall:

1. Maintain good regulatory standing with Child Development Division (CDD) Childcare Licensing Regulations
2. Obtain and maintain 4 or 5 Step Ahead Recognition System (STARS) or National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation
3. Adhere to all applicable federal and state laws



# 11 Compliance Requirements

## Public and Private Prequalified PreK Programs shall:

4. Provide high quality PreK education for each child enrolled for a minimum of 10 hours per week for 35 weeks
5. Ensure program has AOE licensed early childhood educator or early childhood special educator present during PreK hours
6. Ensure curriculum alignment with Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS)



# 11 Compliance Requirements

## Public and Private Prequalified PreK Programs shall:

7. Complete TSGOLD assessment and checkpoints for each child enrolled at least twice per school calendar year by December 15 and June 15
8. At least two times per school calendar year, provide parent/teacher conferences and child progress reports provide parent engagement opportunities



# 11 Compliance Requirements

## Public and Private Prequalified PreK Programs shall:

9. Permit onsite visits from AOE and Child Development Division
10. Permit onsite visits from partner school district staff
11. Participate and comply with all requirements of UPK Monitoring System



## ACIS Framework

Tier 4

**Intensive technical assistance required**

**Onsite Intensive Monitoring**

- Program in jeopardy of revocation

Tier 3

*Targeted Professional Development, Training and*  
**On-site Technical Assistance**

**Targeted Guidance And Resources**  
*Notifications Corrective Actions*

**Onsite Targeted Monitoring-Needs Intervention**

- Desktop monitoring flag
- Field Concerns
- Administrative complaints
- Childcare licensing serious violation
- Educator Violation
- Data Concerns

**Data Sources**

- Annual Assurance
- SharePoint
- BFIS
- ALIS
- TSGOLD
- Child Care Licensing
- STARS
- Special Ed Child Count

Tier 2

*Targeted Professional Development Training, Technical Assistance*

**Targeted Guidance Resources**  
*Notifications Corrective Actions*

**Targeted Monitoring-Needs Assistance**

- Desk monitoring flag
- Field Concerns
- Compliance Concerns
- Childcare licensing violation
- Educator Violation
- Data Concerns

Tier 1

*Professional Development Training, Technical Assistance*

*Guidance And Resources*

**Desk Monitoring**

- UPK Team
- 50/50 Public vs. Private
- Written Notification
- Report of Findings
- 100 programs/ per quarter

**Data Sources**

- PreK App
- SharePoint
- BFIS
- ALIS
- TSGOLD
- STARS

**PreK Application Process**  
Verification and Approval

**Annual Assurances Data Collection**

AOE/AHS Accountability & Continuous Improvement System (ACIS)

# Key Components of UPK ACIS

## 1. UPK Application Process

- a) AHS verification (BFIS/STARS/fingerprint)
- b) AOE verification (VELS/Educator/Assurances)
- c) AOE Final Approval

## 2. Annual Assurance Data Collection

## 3. Monthly Act 166 Interagency Team Meetings

- a) Establishing UPK ACIS interagency advisory committee

## 4. Training and technical assistance developed including learning modules, guidance documents and memos for clarification

## 5. Violation Thresholds, Monitoring Approach, Violations, Correction Periods and Resolution for each Act 166 Requirement have been established

## 6. Procedures and Checklist which designates roles and responsibilities across agencies.

## 7. Standardized notifications, checklists, template documents, flow charts developed for each tier of ACIS framework

# UPK ACIS Actions to Date

The AOE and AHS have conducted investigations of public and private PreK programs and have implemented corrective action plans, and on-site monitoring visits. As a result:

- 5 PreK programs have received a revocation notification for non-compliance of Act 166 requirements within the past 6 months.

Within the last 2 months:

- 11 PreK programs have been elevated to the Tier 2 “needs assistance” or Tier 3 “needs intervention” and are receiving technical assistance currently
- 5 PreK programs have been reported to AOE and/or AHS for alleged concerns or violations. If a violation of childcare licensing regulations has been reported, AHS/CDD will conduct an investigation following agency procedures. If the violation is substantiated AOE receives notification and UPK ACIS investigation is initiated.

STATE OF VERMONT Agency of Education

STUDENTS FAMILIES EDUCATORS ADMINISTRATORS COMMUNITIES

- Home
- Student Learning
- Student Support
- Adult Education
- Early Education
  - Vermont Early Learning Standards
  - Assessment
  - Universal Prekindergarten
    - Applications and Renewals
    - Program Requirements
  - Families of Prekindergarten Students
- Early Childhood Special Education
- Initiatives
- Federal Programs Under ESSA
- Healthy and Safe Schools
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports
- Nutrition
- Special Education
- Educator Licensure
- Education Quality Assurance



### UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN: ACT 166

Welcome! The Act 166 Universal Prekindergarten Education (UPK) webpage is for prekindergarten education program and the families of prekindergarten students. It contains information needed to operate, apply or access UPK in Vermo

#### What is Act 166?

Act 166 of 2014 provides access to publicly-funded prekindergarten education for Vermont students. All prekindergarten education programs, including Head Start and public school-operated programs, must meet specific requirements to operate in Vermont. The State Board of Vermont created administrative rules to guide Act 166 implementation by the Agency of Education and the Agency of Human Services.

#### What is High-Quality, Effective Prekindergarten Education?

What defines Vermont Universal Prekindergarten Education is the implementation of high-quality, effective instructional licensed educators who use evidence-based practices within intentionally designed early learning environments. Early educators align curriculum with the Vermont Early Learning Standards while adapting experiences to support the full participation of each and every child to realize their full potential and promote successful outcomes.

